THE NATURE AND AIM OF THEOSOPHY.

J. D. BUCK.

"Palmam qui meruit ferat."

THEOSOPHY.

PSYCHE

INVOLVED IN THE CYCLE OF NECESSITY,

HEREIN IS OUTLINED THE METHOD

OF HER

LIBERATION

AND RETURN TO

HER HEAVENLY ABODE.

THE

NATURE AND AIM

OF

THEOSOPHY.

AN ESSAY.

BY

J. D. BUCK.

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Dedicated

TO THOSE WHO SEEK

THE TRUTH,

THAT THEY MAY SERVE

THE PERFECT LAW.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The following essay was first published nearly four years ago, and has been for some time out of print; but as there is still considerable inquiry for it, which its publishers are unable to meet, it has been thought best to issue a new edition, and in an improved form.

Since the first appearance of *The Nature and Aim of Theosophy*, as an unpretentious pamphlet, a very large amount of literature on the subject has been given to the public. The demand for information on the subject of Theosophy has given rise to two monthly magazines devoted to such explanations as are sought, and for communication between the society at large and its members scattered through many lands. In London "LUCIFER," the "*Light bearer*," and in New York "THE PATH," are devoted to this purpose, while the "THEOSOPHIST" is still published at Adyar, India, as the organ of the society in the East. The demand for literature on the subject is steadily on the increase, and the above-named journals are distributed quite as extensively outside as within the ranks of the society itself.

During these last four years the number of branch societies and general membership have nearly if not quite doubled, but this by no means represents the diffusion of the doctrines or the strength of the movement. There may be found in every community hundreds of persons who have read with interest these new-old views of nature and of man, and who, if still unconvinced, are by no means satisfied to give up the quest in this direction. It is a common expression with such inquirers that, "Theosophy may be all that it is represented to be, but I can not understand it." The reason for this failure to seize and to understand, lies in the fact that Theosophy traverses the whole realm of human knowledge, including both man and nature, and explains also the nature and foundation of all religions. It is by no means strange, therefore, that the ordinary individual or the average reader should fail to comprehend the entire subject in a few weeks or months. There is a notable absence of both formulary and ultimatum, and this must necessarily be so from the nature of the case. The pursuit of happiness, the glory of God, and the salvation of the soul, are motives and aims that may be definitely stated, and supposed to be easily understood. Yet no one at all familiar with modern thought, and with the conditions of society among both the poor and the rich, needs to be reminded how seldom these formulated objects really satisfy the lives of men and women. Theosophy not only

explains the reason for this wi[illegible]-spread dissatisfaction, but also undertakes to put the inqu[illegible]upon different lines of search with the assurance that entire satisfaction may in time be reached; not however as in a goal to be reached, or a "salvation" attainable once for all. Theosophy rather places man upon a Path, and gives him the assurance beyond all question that he is journeying in the right direction. The light by which he walks no longer flickers, and he has ceased to fear that it will ever go out or disappoint him. The genuine Christian will find his doubts and his obscurities disappearing, and CHRISTOS will be to him a Divinity that is no longer an incomprehensible mystery. Theosophy enables every earnest seeker for truth *to comprehend his own religion*. It never under any circumstances seeks to convert any man from one religion to another, as for example; from Buddhism to Christianity, or from Christianity to Buddhism. "The Mystery of Godliness" is but another name for the mystery *in man*. It will be time enough for man to talk of the mystery of God and the nature of Deity, when he has solved the mystery of his own origin, nature, and destiny. Theosophy undertakes to solve just this mystery. When this mystery is everywhere recognized, it would seem that any prospect of a solution would be hailed with joy. On the other hand, however, it is generally ridiculed or violently opposed before it is even examined, or by any means understood.

"Things settled by long use, if not absolutely good, at least fit well together." We cling to our creeds, our idols, and even to our own ignorance as part of our selfish selves. Men argue, not as seekers of truth, but to maintain their own *opinions*, *right or wrong*, and if beaten in an argument they are by no means convinced of error, they generally get angry. Hence the saying.

> "One convinced against his will,
> Is of the same opinion still."

Every genuine seeker for truth, for knowledge, and for enlightenment, will find in Theosophy that for which he seeks. He who can not rise above ridicule, and whose argument consists largely in blackguarding, will also find in Theosophy a fruitful field. It will reflect for him only his own image as in a magic glass.

The following essay offers but an introduction, a bare outline of the subject, but it seems often to have incited inquiry, and to have led to more thorough search, and thus may have aided a little the spread of knowledge so much needed.

The author has considered the idea of altering and enlarging it, as it is often crude and disjointed. The recent appearance, however, of Madam Blavatsky's "KEY TO THEOSOPHY," has rendered such elaboration of the subject unnecessary. The above work is just what its title indi-

cates. It is a plain, practical, and explicit statement of the objects of the Theosophical Society, and the principles upon which it is founded, such as every intelligent reader can understand. People are of course quite at liberty to reject these doctrines in part or in whole, but the complaint need no longer be made that Theosophy is incomprehensible.

CINCINNATI, *October*, 1889. J. D. B.

INTRODUCTION.

The following essay upon a subject that is just now exciting inquiry, is the barest outline of investigations to which the writer has devoted many years of earnest inquiry and conscientious study. Dissatisfied, in common with many thoughful men and women, both with current beliefs and the soulless negations of materialism, and satisfied that neither the nature nor the destiny of man is comprehended by the faiths or the materialism of the day, and yet that the real truth is not past finding out, the present essay has been prepared as an outline of the results to which he has arrived. In the course of these investigations, animal magnetism, somnambulism, trance, howsoever induced, and the phenomena of modern spiritualism, have been under careful review, not to the extent of exhaustion, which would be practically impossible, but to an extent sufficient for classification and comparison. What is known as modern spiritualism contains a great truth, a still greater delusion, and innumerable downright frauds. The knowledge requisite to discriminate between these is only possessed by the initated Adept, a phenomenon seen

hardly once in a thousand years. To us common mortals, therefore, there remain the fact and the phantasms, beliefs and denials, while phenomenalism or spook-hunting is one of the most dangerous and demoralizing of pastimes, and the condition of the "medium" often pitiable in the extreme, moral perdition and suicide from obsession often staring him in the face; an idea at which spiritualists grow indignant, and which so-called scientists ridicule.

It is an old saying that "All roads lead to Rome." Truth is many-sided, yet ONE. The watch-word of theosophy is TRUTH, and as this one truth relates to all knowledge, whether cosmic or microcosmic, it can not be even outlined in a single essay.

Theosophy is religion, science, and philosophy, and these three at ONCE: a religion, because it aims to know, to become, and, therefore, to worship the TRUTH: a science because it examines by strict analysis all processes in nature, in order to discover that which is: a philosophy, because by logical synthesis from the facts of nature discovered by science, it deduces the laws which underlie phenomena, and govern the universe. Theosophy is therefore the work of a lifetime, nay of many lives or incarnations. Yet need not the neophyte be discouraged, for as said of old, the way is so plain that a man, though a fool, need not err therein, and so simple that a man may read as he runs.

Theosophy differs from modern science which practically ignores one-half of nature, still foolishly and illogically called the SUPERNATURAL. Nature includes all that *is;* then what can be above and beyond nature?

Inside, not *outside* nature, is the moving cause, the GREAT SOUL. Theosophy differs from all philosophies known to modern times, though it contains the essence of all that in them is logical and true, and finds most in common with the philosophy of Schopenhauer, emphasizing like him, both cosmic or deific and human will. It finds much in the philosophy of Swedenborg, and emphasizes the law of correspondence, equilibrium, and harmony. Theosophy differs from all known religions or their outer garb, or exoteric interpretation, while it agrees with and unifies the esoteric or DIVINE WISDOM, which is the foundation of all great religions. It will thus be seen that the subject is inexhaustible, and co-extensive with ETERNAL NATURE. Theosophy lays down certain principles for the neophyte, who as a Student of Nature, enters upon his endless career.

CONSCIENCE, the God within him, is his sole guide; truth, his unswerving aim, not by mere tacit consent, but by zeal, or as Emerson says, "*by honoring every truth by use.*"

Conscientious devotion to knowledge, justice, charity, philanthrophy, constitutes the true theosophist. He recognizes an enlightened conscience as the Voice of God within his own soul, supreme in authority, unerring in its

decisions, uncompromising in its commands and judgments, and to this he listens as to a sacred oracle, a divine revelation, and he heeds no other.

The ancient WISDOM RELIGION was written in hieroglyphics, and expressed by symbols, the true interpretation of which is entirely unknown to modern times. The holy scriptures of all religions were thus written, and to the true follower, the initiate, it was said "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdon of Heaven, but to them it is not given." True initiation was not by forms and ceremonies from without, but by spiritual experience within. This knowledge, as well as the initiation, was set forth by symbols, allegories, and parables. To these symbols there was a key, with which the neophyte could thread the labyrinth and unlock the mystic chambers of knowledge.

Theosophy unfolds this knowledge by discovering the key. But here as elsewhere, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Some have imagined that to become a theosophist, one must retire from the world into the desert or the mountain solitudes, and feed on herbs. The history of the middle ages, of the moral leprosy, and mistaken zeal of many sodalities, no less than the distortions, and horrible deformities of the postulants of the East, ought long ago to have taught the most superficial observer, the everlasting folly of such a course. He who begins by disregarding

any known obligation to family, kindred or country, will end by disregarding all save self, the first and only thing that theosophy bids him disregard. The nominal Christian need not go to India, nor to Jerusalem to learn the principles or methods of theosophy: he will find them abundantly illustrated in his own scriptures, in the teachings attributed to the "Man of Sorrows," though disfigured by forgeries, and distorted by false interpretations. To these teachings when correctly understood, and truthfully interpreted, theosophy has little to add or take away; but to the exegesis of sanhedrims, synods, councils, and ecclesiastical commands, it has *every thing* to object. It repudiates them *in toto*, as crafty, time-serving, selfish and false, crucifying again the Christ, and hiding the *truth* designed to bind the conscience of the ignorant, to the service of greed and lust for power. The most sacred possession of man is CONCIENCE, the Voice of God within the soul. No greater folly can be commited than to entrust this *divine voice* to the keeping of another. No greater crime, than for another to claim by divine right, to be his brother's keeper. Modern civilization has repudiated human slavery. It remains for it to remove the shackles of the soul, and free the conscience; then shall man learn the difference between liberty and license, and make fruitful the vineyard of the Lord. The sale of indulgences precipitated the reformation; let freedom of the

soul in the light of science and civil freedom complete it. In conclusion, a word may be said regarding the frontispiece. As already remarked, the ancients expressed by symbols and allegories the deepest truths, which by Degrees were unfolded gradually to the neophyte as the "mysteries of initiation." The nature, origin, fall and redemption of man were thus represented, and this from no mere fancy or foolish fable, but from actual knowledge scientifically ascertained. No more beautiful and instructive fable exists in ancient writing than that of "*Cupid and Psyche*," the descent of the soul into matter, as told by Apulius and other ancient writers. The frontis, taken from a recent reprint of "The Divine Pymander," illustrates this fable. The four elements symbolized by the man's winged head, the eagle, the lion, and the ox, also the four ages, the Golden age, the age of Silver, Copper, and Iron —the sun and the moon representing the dual cosmic powers, the serpents representing the sexual entrance into life, the conjunction of planets or stars determining conditions of birth, life, etc.—all these and more, may be read from this beautiful picture. To purify the soul, and liberate it from the *cycle of necessity*, the chains of matter, the "*old serpent*," that environ it, and so enabling it to regain its pristine purity and heavenly abode, is the problem of occultism or theosophy. To put science in the place of sentiment, philosophy in the place of speculation, relig-

'ion in the place of superstition, knowledge in the place of ignorance: to practice and unfold the principle of altruism, or the essential Brotherhood of Humanity, and over all to recognize *Law*, *Justice* and *Truth*, is the purpose of theosophy.

THEOSOPHY.

The term theosophy is by no means a new one, though many persons, doubtless, have heard it recently for the first time.

The etymology of the word will aid us but little in arriving at its real meaning. At the organization of the Theosophical Society in New York City, some ten years ago, this name was selected to represent its nature and aims, and wisely so, as the sequel will show.*

If we inquire into the use made of this term in either ancient or modern times, we shall find, that while it has quite as much to do with a knowledge of man, as with the "Wisdom of God," it, in fact, unifies both.

Pythagoras defines philosophy as the "love of knowl-

*NOTE—There are many societies older than the Theosophical Society, that teach substantially the same doctrines, occultism: even the names of many of these societies are never mentioned to the uninitiated.

edge." When Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, asked Pythagoras, "Are there in your country no wise men?" the sage replied, "No; we are not wise, but lovers of wisdom."

In earlier times, as now, there was a great deal of mystery surrounding theosophy. The theosophists were also styled Mystics, while mysticism, occultism, and theosophy have often stood for the same thing.

If we seek in earlier times an exponent of the doctrines and principles of theosophy, we shall perhaps find no more prominent character than Jacob Böhme, who styled himself THE TEUTONIC THEOSOPHER, and who wrote numerous volumes some three hundred years ago. Böhme was, as the world goes, a poor, little, ignorant shoemaker of Old Seidenburg, in Upper Lusatia. He was persecuted during his life, driven from his home, denied Christian burial, and this persecution was continued to his wife and children after his death, by the avaricious and licentious priesthood of his time; and yet, strange to say, Böhme's works are orthodox in the strictest sense, and furnish the basis of doctrine and the life work of his translator and commentator, the celebrated English divine Wm. Law. So much for the consistency of orthodoxy and the irony of history.

But the study of the writings of Böhme has been by no means confined to the church. Among the manuscripts

left by Sir Isaac Newton were found copious translations from Böhme, while Goethe, Oken, Schopenhauer, and in our own country, Emerson, were among his profound admirers, and this, notwithstanding the fact that from first to last Böhme's works were written in the jargon of the alchemists, "The Great Work," and the "salt, sulphur, and mercury" veiling from the ignorant and the profane on the one side, and the Torquemadas on the other, the "Divine Sophia," the "Pearl," which on every page it was solemnly declared should never be "cast before swine."

The ignorant worship what they can not understand, and the rulers by divine right in church and state, have ever seized on this fact to keep the masses in ignorance and bondage; hence, that mysticism which is knowledge to the wise, is a mystery to the ignorant. If, therefore, we turn in an age of intelligence and free inquiry to the records of mysticism, we shall find that they have furnished the loftiest themes to musician, artist, poet, and painter; and that by these lights the monuments of history stand revealed.

Richard Wagner seized upon the "Legend of the Holy Grail," the very center and core of mysticism, and scorning alike criticism and conventionally, places his Parsifal among the immortal stars of human genius.

Goethe retouches the Faust Legend, and our critics of a materialistic *régime* have not yet traveled beyond the

"first part" in solving the mystery; and where they have solved the second, they will have to review again the first part.

So also in art, the *Laocoön* remains a sphynx, in spite of critic and reviewer; while the Pyramids, immortal in their strength and grandeur, sublime in their simplicity, defying alike the hand of time and the unaided intellect of man, are only now beginning to tell their story.

What is the meaning of this revival of theosophy in the nineteenth century?

Every student of the philosophy of history, every thoughful observer of human nature, must have discovered that cyclic changes every-where obtained in the affairs of men; and if he goes deep enough, he will discover that these cycles constitute a spiral, fitly symbolized by the Tower of Babel, never yet revealed in the confusion of tongues. It is furthermore known, that the revolutions of the Sun, Moon, and Earth, are not the only ones that affect the children of men. The Cycle of Meton, as it is called, gives to the church, Catholic and Protestant alike, their times and seasons, fasts and feasts. Another great cycle closed, we are told, in 1881, and those deeply versed in the ancient wisdom tell us, that between this date and 1888, very important changes will occur, affecting the climate and surface of the earth, no less than the health, and the moral and spiritual well-being of man.

A recent delver in the mysteries of the Caballah* has discovered hidden in the Hebrew text of the Bible, not only the modulus on which the Pyramids were constructed, but the very equation, to the last decimal place, by which we now calculate the distance of the sun; and though I might add hundreds of equally startling discoveries of ancient wisdom, there is nevertheless a discovery, or rather a revelation, beside which these empirical data sink into insignificance. It is this revelation, as the sequel will show, that gives a new impulse to the term theosophy.

This is the age of science. Steam, electricity, and the printing press have changed the face of the habitable globe, and we boast alike of material progress and political freedom; yet the inexorable law of compensation holds good here as elsewhere, and material advancement is marked by spiritual decline.

No effect is without a cause. So long as the church, whether Catholic or Protestant, was dominant, so long as the ignorant masses were content to accept on faith the dicta of religion, we heard little of the conflict of religion and science. But the pendulum has swung from that blind superstition which fears and trembles, but dares not question, to that crass materialism which dares not be-

* Mr. J. Ralston Skinner.

lieve, and is too indifferent even to investigate. Our boasted liberty has degenerated into lawlessness; our national gods are Mammon and Materialism, twin monsters, whose insane votaries are forever clutching each other's throats, and the *unholy trinity* that stares us in the face is *rum*, *riot*, and *ruin*. A doleful picture indeed, but "'t is true, 't is pity, and pity 't is, 't is true." Every earnest, thoughtful soul, every true man and woman desires a remedy for this sad state into which we have fallen, this moral leprosy into which we have plunged. We are pointed to the churches and to the Christian religion, but alas! though many noble, earnest souls still cling to the forms, from which both life and soul have departed, though many are far better and few worse than their creeds, yet have these abuses in the body social and the body politic, not only grown apace with the churches, but they have crept into them, till the world is no nearer redemption today than it was a thousand years ago. We are pointed to hospitals for the sick, infirmaries for the insane, homes for orphans and the aged, as the work largely of organized church charity, yet besides these institutions flourish also alms-houses, penitentiaries, reform schools, Magdalen and foundling homes, institutions that are unknown and unneeded in many of those heathen countries to which we send missionaries. The very presence of these institutions is a confession that we do not know how to prevent

crime, seduction, bastardy, insanity, and pauperage. If we add to all this, the increase of crime, drunkenness, political and moral degradation, it may be well to inquire whither our boasted civilization tends? Had the organized churches presented an adequate remedy, backed by the power of divine truth, such a condition of things had been impossible; but the trouble lies not in the nature and basis of that religion as originally laid down, and for the first three centuries exemplified, as will appear further on. It is not because the churches are Christian, but because they are *un*-Christian, involved with the rest in Mammon-worship and materialism, unwilling to believe, and yet unable to domonstrate the fact that the spirit of man is immortal. People have grown tired of theological hair-splitting, and we hear little nowadays of the gentleman with hoofs and horns that terrified a former generation of evil-doers. Sheol is a sort of warmed-over joke for the place of torment; fear has departed, though wisdom has by no means taken its place.

With this condition of things acknowledged and lamented, there is a large and increasing class in the community who have outgrown the old creeds, born of the interpretations of an ignorant age, when ecclesiasticism held temporal power, and when to question was to burn. This class, who are weary of endless discussions that lead to no conclusions that reason can accept, who are bewildered,

and at last silenced, but not convinced, call themselves *Agnostic*, and in apathy or despair, are content to say, *We do not know.*

As a class, these people are intelligent; as citizens, moral; as men and women kind and charitable; but, unfortunately, they are looked up to by the masses, who oppressed by poverty, and enslaved by ignorance, carry on their banner the fatal motto, "*We do not care.*"

These ignorant masses looking in vain to those who from education, position, and opportunity, ought to be a help to the unfortunate and an inspiration to the despairing, become wearied, disappointed, and envious, and it is from this large class that our prisons, alms-houses, insane asylums, and foundlings homes are recruited. They have asked for bread, and we have given them a stone. The criticism and materialism of the age have deprived them of their faith, and yet have been unable to lead them into knowledge. If you talk to them of religion and the churches, they laugh at you; if you deprive them of liquor, they will stone you, and burn your houses for attempting to take away the last solace of the despairing, oblivion. These are the conditions that stare us in the face. Is human life on this planet necessarily a failure? Are the nature, the ministry, and the destiny of man past finding out? Has not the time come for us to take council together?

Every thoughful observer of the times, must have dis-

covered that the creeds of the world are crumbling into dûst; the advancement of science has undermined them. Here, not even the law of the survival of the fittest obtains; they are all full of error, all false, and must all go, soon or late. But back of all these is the everlasting truth, from which they sprung through man's ignorant attempts to formulate. The philosophy of Plato, the doctrines of the Essenes and Gnostics, entered largely into the Christian philosophy, but even these were veiled in mystery, to be comprehended only by the initiated like Paul.

There always was the secret, esoteric interpretation for the initiated, and the letter of the law for the common people. This secret wisdom is no longer in the possession of the priesthood; their patent has therefore expired. The children of this generation are wiser in many things than the priests of old, and the amount of general and scientific information possessed by the people renders the old land-marks, the old methods, useless. The basis of religion must neither ignore, nor do violence to philosophy, to science, or to the common sense of mankind.

Suppose we adopt for our motto that of the Maharajahs of Benares, THERE IS NO RELIGION HIGHER THAN TRUTH; and then, instead of arrogantly or apathetically inquiring what is truth, let us agree that truth has always one sign, one quality, *It always agrees with itself*, and taking the

three categories of human knowledge, religion, philosophy, and science, see if we can not find a scientific philosophy and a philosophical religion, in other words a GNOSIS. This is the problem presented by theosophy, and it is squarely met, and the number, character, and intelligence of those who have received from it a satisfactory answer, is far greater than most people suppose.

For the time being the old creeds must be laid aside, though the Christian retains his Christianity, the Jew his Judaism, the Buddhist and Mohamedan their peculiar faith, and if he chooses, his own forms of worship, being required only to exercise that degree of courtesy and toleration towards others that he requires for himself, while the creeds and basis of all religions are passed under review. Very soon it will be discovered, that while the basis and inspiration are the same, the formulations only differ, and as these formulations are shown to be untrue and effete, they will be easily discarded, one and all.

It will thus be seen that at the very beginning is achieved that basis of Brotherhood which all other methods have failed to attain. Presently we shall begin to learn the meaning of that old inscription written in letters of gold, over the entrance of the temples, MAN, KNOW THYSELF. A new meaning will be given to that old saying, "The kingdom of heaven is within you," and we will have grown philosophical enough to add, *so, also, is the kingdom of hell.*

The scientist has a perfect right to demand proof that there is such a thing as a human soul, now that he, in common with the majority of mankind, has lost the consciousness of it. While, therefore, the scientist pursues his investigations by strictly scientific methods, the true philosopher will cease his foolish speculations concerning the "unknowable," will quit chopping logic and sawing the air, and by strict synthesis, without logical flaw or false syllogism, from the facts discovered by science, will deduce the laws that underlie the occult and mysterious nature of man.

By and by our agnostic will become interested, and in place of apathetically saying, "We do not know," he will declare that, *by the everlasting intelligence he will find out;* and if he sufficiently emphasize the little word WILL, his labors will not be in vain, as thousands who have made the experiment can assure him. Such a reconciliation of religion, philosophy, and science, a platform on which all can stand without the sacrifice of intelligence or self-respect, seems too good to be true. Is it not at least worth an effort?

It is not proposed, be it observed, to replace Christianity by Buddhism, nor Buddhism by Mohammedanism, nor both by Judaism, nor yet all three by Spiritualism, but to bring each of the old religions back to its esoteric origin, meaning, and purity, and if they are found to be in es-

sence ONE, shall we not have found the TRUE RELIGION OF HUMANITY?

But just here appears the need of wisdom, not only to declare, but ability to demonstrate the esoteric basis of all religions, including lost records that shall put the matter beyond all dispute.

Now suppose that at this stage of our proceedings, it were discovered that there are living men who possess just this knowledge and ability, and possess these records; men who had gone over all this ground, not by patching together fragments of different religions, but who possess a knowledge of science, so profound as to dwarf into insignificance our boasted modern discoveries: who, living in communities far removed and purposely inaccessible to modern civilization, have preserved the priceless treasures of the past: who, removed from the vicious influence of modern civilization, and possessing a knowledge of the laws of life, live to an age that to us seems incredible, transmitting from generation to generation of selected and initiated Neophytes, their accumulated wisdom and priceless treasures; and who now at the completion of one of the world's GREAT CYCLES, for the first time in centuries give out to the world a part of their treasures; requiring no pledge, save only *allegiance* to *truth*, no price, save that he who receives shall as freely give, and so help along the reign of Universal Brotherhood among the races of men.

These Brothers are willing and anxious to teach every earnest soul, and to demonstrate the truth of all the above propositions, "*Truth* and only TRUTH," being their motto, and that demonstrable and free to all who will investigate and receive it.

What I have supposed, is but a bare recital of that which has actually come to pass, and among the thousands over all the world, who have taken these Brothers at their word, I have not heard of one who has been disappointed or turned away.

I am aware that such a statement will strike many people as incredible, and that they will be inclined to question the sanity of him who makes it; yet it is the barest outline of the simple truth. It will at once be asked, how have these Brothers been able to keep their very existence so long a secret?

I answer, that the Law of Silence was ever the first to be observed, and that according to their own statement their safety has often consisted in that the people refused to believe such an existence possible. Read the account given by Abbe Huc, for which he was unfrocked by his ecclesiastical superiors, and his still more startling statements outside his published works. Or, in more ancient times, read the account that Apollonius of Tyana gives of his visit to these Brothers, though it is evident on every page that he conceals far more than he reveals. Again,

read the account in that old work, "*Hermippus Redivivus*" of these "Sons of Light." Coming down to more recent times, read the account that travelers, and even missionaries, give of the wonders performed by half-naked traveling Fakirs, a faint echo of the transcendent powers and lofty genius of the Holy men of the Himavat, the existence of whom the Fakirs would declare, could they be induced to speak.

In spite of evidence to be derived from many sources, some, no doubt, will content themselves with denying the whole thing as simply incredible, an old woman's fable, and go on repeating, "We do not know," or "We do not care." Those, however, and they are many, who have read Mr. Sinnett s Occult World and Esoteric Buddhism, and the later work by Two Chelas; Man, Fragments of Forgotten History, ought to supplement them with those rare jewels, The Idyll of the White Lotus, and Light on the Path; and if by this time they are not interested enough to inquire whether this is all true, and if there is more from the same source, they may as well defer the matter to the next incarnation.

Soon after the appearance of Isis Unveiled the headquarters of the Theosophical Society removed from New York City, first to Bombay, and subsequently to Adyar, in the Madras presidency, India, where they permanently remain. Branch societies are scattered all over India and

Ceylon, as well as most civilized countries of the globe. The Theosophical Society is the medium through which the Brothers have undertaken to present to the world their long cherished doctrines, in such form as the world is found ready to receive, and in such measures as the times require, practical, not merely intellectual, Universal Brotherhood being the one condition of affiliation insisted on, while the terms of more intimate relations with the Brothers themselves, or Chelaship, are clearly set forth, for, to use their own words, they say, "We refuse no one."

Upon the organization of one of the Branch Societies in India, it was thought by some of the members, that it would be a good thing to organize on a different basis from the rest, and to have certain educated Englishmen connected therewith, taken in hand by the Brothers, and drilled in practical occultism, taught, in fact, the secret wisdom which had been so jealously guarded for centuries, and so constitute a Theosophical Hierarchy. One is not likely to misunderstand the answer returned by one of the Brothers to this suggestion. I quote a portion of the unpublished letter.

"The world in general and Christendom especially, left for two thousand years to the *régime* of a personal God, as well as its political and social systems, based on that idea, has now proved a failure.

"If the theosophist says we have nothing to do with

all this, the lower classes and inferior races, those of India for instance, in the conception of the British, can not concern us, and must manage as they can, what becomes of our fine professions of benevolence, philanthrophy, reform, etc.? Are these professions a mockery; and if a mockery can ours be the true path? Shall we devote ourselves to teaching a few Europeans fed on the fat of the land, many of them loaded with the gifts of blind fortune, the *rationale* of bell-ringing, cup-growing, and astral body formation, and leave the teeming millions of the ignorant, the poor and despised, the lowly and oppressed, to take care of themselves, and their hereafter, the best they know how? NEVER! perish rather the Theosophical Society with both its hapless founders, than that we should permit it to become no better than an academy of magic, and a hall of occultism; and it is we, the humble disciples of these perfect Lamas, who are expected to allow the Theosophical Society to drop its noblest title, '*The Brotherhood of Humanity*,' to become a simple school of philosophy. Let us understand each other. He who does not feel competent enough to grasp the noble idea sufficiently to work for it, need not undertake a task too heavy for him. But there is hardly a theosophist in the whole society unable to effectually help it, by correcting the erroneous impression of outsiders, if not by actually propagating himself this idea. Oh for the noble and unselfish man to help

us effectually in India, in that divine task! All our knowledge, past and present, would not be sufficient to repay him. The true religion and philosophy offers the solution of every problem. That the world is in such a bad condition morally, is conclusive evidence that none of its religions and philosophies, those of the civilized races less than any other, have ever possessed the truth. The right and logical explanation of the subject of the problems of the great dual principles, 'right and wrong,' 'good and evil,' 'liberty and despotism,' 'pain and pleasure,' 'egotism and altruism,' are as impossible to them now as they were 1881 years ago. They are as far from the solution as they were; but to these there must be somewhere a consistent solution, and if our doctrines will show their competence to offer it, then the world will be the first to confess it. That must be the true philosophy, the true light, the true religion, which gives truth, and nothing but the truth."

It will thus be seen what are the principles and aims of these exalted Brothers, in relation to the masses of mankind, and that they are no respecters of persons. It may be asked, why have these transcendent truths been so long withheld from the world? To this it may be answered, that they who possess and comprehend them, are likely to know also the times and seasons when they can make headway in the world, and to announce them prematurely,

would be to lose them, and destroy their custodians, if they had not the power to provide against such a catastrophe. It is a cardinal principle in occultism, that, by a knowledge of, and conformity to the laws of nature, the Adept is able to accomplish that which to the ignorant seems miraculous. Says a wise occultist, "The wicked obey the law through fear; the wise keep the law through knowledge."

Political freedom and the advancement of science have on the one hand, made the promulgation of these doctrines possible, while the crumbling of creeds, and the materialism of the age, have rendered them necessary to the well-being of the human race.

Again it may be said, that the Secret Doctrine has never been without witnesses in the world, and though these witnesses like the doctrine itself, have been surrounded by mystery, and have written or spoken in a language unintelligible to the profane, yet have they ever been open to all who have knocked in the right way. These mysteries have cropped out in many forms, though never for ages so plainly as now, FOR THEIR TIME HAS COME.

In the middle ages these mysteries were embodied in the obscure writings of the alchemists, at once the despair and the subject of hatred and ridicule with the ignorant who could not comprehend them. But the odor of burning human flesh too often accompanied the illumina-

tion of these manuscripts to make revelations either desirable or profitable.*

The Rosicrucians, concerning whom so much has been written and so little known, embodied more or less of these doctrines. To these may be added the writings of Plato, the Neo-Platonists, the doctrines of Pythagoras, and those of the Kabalists, Hermetists, and others. There is no proof, however, that any of these were more than an echo of the transcendent wisdom of the Brothers of the Himavat. All these records were obscure, purposely veiled, so that there was not the least danger of their becoming known to the ignorant and profane, for be it remembered there were always both the right and the left hand paths to which this wisdom held the key. The former leading to Nirvana, or the at-one-ment of man, and the regeneration of the human race: the other Black Magic, leading at first to occult power, but finally and inevitably to everlasting destruction. The motto of the first is, ALL FOR TRUTH, AND TRUTH FOR THE SAKE OF HUMANITY: the

* "Who dare call the child by its right name?
The few that know something of it,
And foolishly opened their hearts,
Revealing to the vulgar crowd their views,
Were ever crucified or burnt."
—GOETHE'S FAUST.

motto of the second, ALL FOR POWER, AND POWER FOR SELF, AND THE DEVIL TAKE HUMANITY!

These Holy Brothers of Himavat, deeming the times propitious, offer to the world, for the first time in many centuries, just so much of their treasured wisdom, as it shows itself willing and capable of receiving. To this promulgation, it has already been shown, one only condition is attached, viz., that the neophyte shall work with the Brothers for the elevation and liberation of the whole human race, without regard to color, sex, creed or nationality; to all such the doors now are wide open, and to none others, though the sublime philosophy is published to the world. This basis of universal brotherhood, however, involves more than is at first supposed. It involves the idea of what Böhme calls the "Becoming Man," *i. e.*, that man shall not merely give intellectual assent to the propositions, but that he shall *become* that which he professes, and, sinking self, exercise universal philanthropy and love of man. "DEEDS," say they, "ARE WHAT WE WANT, FINE SPEECHES COUNT FOR NAUGHT."

There is one problem involved which deserves special mention. It is the old question, If a man die, shall he live again? We are told, and the statement is supported by sound philosophy, that man survives the grave, that the soul continues after death; indeed, that what we call death, is but a change, necessitated by both cosmic and

physiological law. We are further told, that this proposition is subject to, and capable of demonstration to all who are well advanced on the Path, and that it will be furnished to the Chela at the proper time, this knowledge constituting one stage of initiation. But this does not fully answer the question. A more important question is, in the state after death, called Devachan, shall we preserve self-consciousness? and the ready answer is, "*That depends.*" The idea of arbitary rewards and punishments being done away with, as belonging to an ignorant age, when such unjust conceptions were possible, exact judgment, absolute and impartial, takes its place. This again does away with another misconception which narrows the sphere, and limits the administrations of justice, viz., the idea that we, as human beings on this earth, are here now for the first, or necessarily for the last time, our unconsciousness of previous incarnations being no proof to the contrary, when the reasons for such unconsciousness are made known. We thus reach the conclusion, that our being here now, the conditions upon which we come, and all the vicissitudes to which we are subjected, are not by the decrees of chance or blind fate, nor yet of an inscrutable power, called by whatsoever name, but that all this has been determined by our own acts, thoughts, and motives in a previous incarnation. This law of cause and effect is designated *Karma*, and the importance of its consideration ap-

pears from this, that if it be true, we are at present ourselves voluntarily determining, not once for all our future weal or woe, but preparing conditions for future life, from which there is no escape, and for which we can accuse no power in the universe but ourselves. If this be true, and every one has to "work out his own salvation with fear and trembling," procrastination does not help us; what we put off to-day, we shall have to do to-morrow; the Nemesis is on our track, and the judge is our own conscience, and herein is seen both the prize and the penalty of self-conscious humanity. A new light is reflected on the story of Dives and Lazarus. Opportunities misapplied, intelligence, wealth, and power used all for self, and to oppress the poor, the ignorant, and degraded, by the eternal law of compensation, will re-act on ourselves, beyond the reach of prayers or penance, or mumbling of creeds, when the cycle of necessity is completed; measure for measure, the injury done to others will return to him who sent it along the unerring way.

This placing conscience as the supreme judge, gives real meaning to the word, Emanuel, "God with us," and reverting again to the question of consciousness after death, it is shown that man may not only determine, by his life here, the fact of consciousness, but that by conforming to the known laws of nature, he may prolong this present existence far beyond the average, and so having

time in which to work out the results of errors in previous states, he may decide for himself, not only the conditions of reincarnation, but incarnation itself, whether yes or no, and so pass from the law of Karma into personal liberty, called in Scripture, "redemption from sin," thus becoming free from the law, by obeying it. This condition is known in Eastern philosophies as *Nirvana*, foolishly translated as *annihilation*. To the early Christians it was known as at-one-ment, beside which the old Jewish doctrine of atonement by innocent blood, is the height of cruelty and injustice, repugnant alike to reason and intelligence.

If this be the line of progress, the destiny of the human race, and evolution be given this grand and transcendent meaning, how time-serving and suicidal appears the materialism into which we are plunged. How puerile the agnosticism which helplessly says, "we do not know;" how lamentable, how pitiable the condition of that "Great Orphan, Humanity," which, brutalized by ignorance, hopeless and despairing, at last cries, "*we do not care!*" and so drifts into pauperism, crime, insanity, and death, to be lost in the awful blackness of oblivion, or returns after weary ages, to begin over again the struggle for self-consciousness, hampered by the web of their old Karma. To make known this truth to the world, was the "great work" of the old alchemists, no less than of the Thibetan Brotherhood, and they desire a Universal Brotherhood

of man, to work with them, and so lift the Karma of the world.

In the way of the progress of this great work, stand not only the creeds of Christendom, but those of the whole world, each claiming a patent of authority direct from the Most High; each striving now, as for ages, to tear down all others, that it may build up its own; in which insane effort, it has been truly said more blood has been spilt, more lives sacrificed, than by war, famine, and pestilence combined; this is indeed, MOLOCH! THE SCOURGE OF THE HUMAN RACE!!

The creeds of the world have not changed their nature, though they have been forced to change their methods and penalties for heresy. The civilized world hears with horror of a religious war, knowing how relentlessly it is waged, how cruelly conducted. History has impressed this lesson in letters of fire and blood. The genius of creeds, no longer able either to convert or exterminate mankind, unable to show any marked contrast in morals, or that simple honesty which goes to make good citizenship, between its votaries and large masses of mankind outside its allegiance, is content to accept an intellectual assent, with liberal mental reservation on the part of its nominal adherents, and so setting at naught the at-one-ment of man through *The Christ*, is still powerful for evil, and that only. Thousands nominally profess belief, because they see no better way,

and from sheer habit, tradition, and inheritance, walk in the old way. The *father of lies*, is also the father of creeds and not He who made of one blood all the nations of the earth. The time is not distant when we must choose between our creeds, and the Brotherhood of man, for they are antagonistic to the last degree; and that faith which is to remove mountains, was never yet involved in the mumbling of creeds, else had the earth long ago become a dead level. Modern science has yet to learn the height and grandeur to which human beings may attain on this earth, as the focalized result of the dual law of evolution and involution; and professed believers in Christ have also to learn the truth of the assertion, "These signs shall follow them that believe." The days of miracle, have, indeed, passed, for those of law and enlightenment are at hand, enlightenment through obedience to law, the Higher Law, of love, and Universal Brotherhood. Had but a tithe of the wealth squandered in the propagation of creeds in foreign lands where better creeds prevail, been spent in uniting the human race under this higher law, the millennium would long ago have dawned. Theosophy has this one central idea, the Brotherhood of man. Among its devoted followers are Jews, Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, Brahmanists, Mohammedans, Parsees, people of every race, clime and color. All that is asked, is that each sect shall go back to the fountain-head of its own religion, as-

sured that when they have removed the accretions of time, the innovations of greed and selfishness, the false interpretations of ignorance, they will find beneath it all, the pure *Wisdom Religion*, the Divine Sophia of Jacob Böhme; the Divine Beatrice of Dante; the Pure Gold of the alchemist; the White Rose of the Rosicrucians; the Virgin of the World of Hermes Trismegistus; the Virgin Isis, the Virgin Mother of the Christ of all the ages that are, that have been, that shall be; forever pure and virgin, yet forever bringing forth; mother, wife, sister, and daughter of Osiris; the gentle, loving, tender Woman-side of the Life-giver of the Universe: the better half, of every man of woman born, through which alone at-one-ment of the human race is possible, through which alone the God which is ONE can ever become all in all, THEO-SOPHIA.

Even St. Augustin says: "What is now called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the human race until Christ came, from which time the true religion, which existed already, began to be called Christian." *

Many have been attracted to theosophy through certain occult phenomena which belong to the higher initiates, and which, we are told, through the reign of brotherhood,

* Quoted by Heckethorne, "Secret Societies," p. 12, Introduction.

will belong to the human race when redeemed from the slough of Mammon and materialism. To place these powers at the command of those who are influenced by desire for wealth, fame, or power, would be to propagate only a brood of black magicians. Even in bible times, while there were colleges of soothsayers, schools of the prophets, and the like, it was commanded that a witch should be put to death. Those therefore who are attracted by signs and wonders, and expect only to witness phenomena or learn magic, will find the Brothers of Himavat as frigid as the snowy peaks they are supposed to inhabit; nay, they will never find them.

The phenomena of modern spiritualism have convinced most people, that there is another side to this every-day life of the world, though even the better sort among avowed spiritualists are convinced that the foul air of dark seance-rooms, with bell-ringing, and trumpet-blowing, are not only profitless, but often dangerous and demoralizing pastimes. Beyond the bare fact of conviction above referred to, efforts to bring spirits back to earth and down into matter, are reversing the only process whereby humanity ever has or can advance, viz., by elevating the life of man from the lowlands of existence, through aspiration and inspiration, into light and knowledge. The profound philosophy already given out by the Brothers, makes plain the character of all such phenomena, though by so doing they

have roused the hostility of many spiritualists. In the whole realm of communication with the supposed spirits of the dead, the wish is father to the thought, and they are many who would rather hug a delusion, than know the truth, especially when that truth flatters not pride and self-conceit.

To the intelligent theosophist, there is neither past nor future time, but *one everlasting now.*

Change is written over and through all things of earth. We are not to-day what we were yesterday. Our goal to-day will be our starting point to-morrow. "That which has been, is not what it was; yet that which has been is."

The enlightened understanding of man seizes truth by intuition, and whether on the material or spiritual plane, when he begins to discern the plan, and comprehend the law, nature becomes an open scroll, in which he may read the wonders of his own being, no less than those of the universe about him.

To awaken thought, to arrest attention, to stimulate investigation, occult phenomena have occasionally been made use of; but when to the thought thus aroused the real problems of theosophy have been presented, many have turned away; joined to their idols, clamoring for the flesh-pots, time-serving, they have been unable or unwilling to seek the Truth.

The Brothers are no miracle-mongers, nor yet scribes

and secretaries, with nothing to do but to answer foolish questions that have been answered a thousand times; nay, which any one can determine by consulting his own intelligence. Time and again, have they stated the problem substantially as herein outlined. Our number is not legion; we can not superintend the primary education of those who know not the alphabet of unselfishness, and who can only use the ten digits to count profit and loss in the lucre of the world. Divest yourselves of pride, lust, greed, and uncharitableness; work with us for the redemption of the world, the regeneration of man; work on your own plane, in your own way, and by and by there shall come to you "a new heaven and a new earth;" the "veil of Isis" shall be opened; the Comforter shall come, your own purified spirit, and lead you into all truth. "He who lives the life shall know the doctrine."

Pause not to ask your brother what he believes; lay by your foolish shibboleths; pause not to count the cost or profit, leave that to time, to law. "If I will that I tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." Do this. *Do! Do!!* and you are ours, and all we have is yours, for this is the at-one-ment of man. Cost what it may of pain or sorrow, tear the scales of self from the eye of your soul, and the Sons of Light will come to meet you, even in the shadow, ere yet the full-orbed day has come. The eye of self and sense hath never yet con-

ceived the glory that shall be revealed, not in the far-off heaven, but here, now, in your own soul; and when you have been faithful over a few things, then shall ye be rulers over many things.

"Oh for the noble and unselfish man to help us effectually in India, in Europe, in America, anywhere, everywhere, in that divine task; all our knowledge, past and present, would not be sufficient to repay him."

"*The Mahatmas are honest debtors.*"

NOTE—As this goes to press, I notice the report heralded triumphantly from many quarters, of the "Collapse of Koot Hoomi and the Theosophical Society!" If this saturnalian shout were new, it would be interesting to the well-informed, but old as it is, as old as theosophy itself, it can only impose on the ignorant, to keep them in bondage and hide the truth, so that the few may dominate the many. The Jews imagined that Christianity collapsed when they murdered Jesus: the Roman Emperors again, when they burned Christians to illuminate their gardens: and so, in every age, falsehood, in every garb of authority, by blood, murder, fire, and sword, has imagined the truth collapsed. There is a change of methods, as burning is out of fashion, and a change of names, from God's Vicegerent and In-

quisitor-General, to the Society for Psychic Research, who imagine that by showing a leading and professed theosophist as a fraud, theosophy itself is collapsed. Admitting for the sake of the argument, all they claim of fraud or deception on the part of individuals, and they have proved only the weakness or wickedness of individuals, nothing more. These individuals are quite competent to answer for themselves. So, also, is theosophy; and they who comprehend its teachings, its sublime and everlasting truth, are not alarmed by the exegesis of Materialism and so-called Science, more than by those of other names and greater dignity.

"They are slaves, who dare not speak
For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves, who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
Rather than, in silence, shrink
From the truth they needs must think;
They are slaves, who dare not be
In the right with two or three."

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

It could hardly be expected that four years should pass in the history of the Theosophical Society without another "collapse." It has accordingly come. This time the

news is heralded from the camp of the spiritualists, and consists of a genuine revival in one section of the aforesaid camp, the "*materializations*" of which consist entirely of mud, and the manifestations consist solely of low blackguarding. The "*seance*" was spiritual, if the intoxication that followed is any criterion. The chairman of the Theosophical Convention held at Chicago, in April of 1888, was with difficulty restrained from issuing a "Bull excommunicating the Pope at Rome." The aforesaid chairman, having been retired from the society, and being at full liberty to join the *seance* above named, has now perpetuated his "roaring farce" by excommunicating or "expelling" Madame Blavatsky from the society which she organized, and of which *he is no longer a member, or in any way connected.* It is unnecessary to add comment to this recital of facts. These frequent *collapses*, however, remind one of the Irishman's stone wall, as described by that veteran philanthropist and member of the Theosophical Society, Parker Pillsbury. Pat said he built his wall four feet high and five feet wide, so that, if it fell over, it would be a foot higher than it was before! It has long been noted that, after every "*collapse*," the Theosophical Society springs into renewed life, and takes deeper root, spreading wider its branches, while the Bull "expelling Madame H. P. Blavatsky" is hardly funny enough to be Celtic, or dignified enough to deserve notice. Among the

many thousands of members of the Theosophical Society scattered over nearly every country of the civilized world, these matters are well understood. Only those who are ignorant of the facts can be deceived by them. To repress or to distort the truth, to impose on the ignorant and credulous, and to blackguard one's opponents, seems to be the sign-manual of those who forever raise the saturnalian shout, "*The Theosophical Society is collapsed.*" When the essential Brotherhood of Humanity ceases to be a fact whether recognized by individuals or not, then indeed, may Theosophy become a farce and the Theosophical Society collapse, AND NOT TILL THEN.

That even the members of the Theosophical Society should every-where and at all times act on the principle and live up to the requirements of universal brotherhood is hardly to be expected. Whenever the great mass of humanity act upon this principle the millennium will have come. Then there will be no need of Theosophical Societies to keep before the world the principle of altruism, the pure and undefiled doctrine of the Buddhas and the Christ, untrammeled by creeds, and unclouded by ritualism.

A Theosophist is one who in thought, word, and deed, every-where and at all times, lives up to the Christ-principle of altruism, best expressed by the phrase, The Universal Brotherhood of Man. A consistent member

of the Theosophical Society is one who is doing his best in this direction, and striving to become a Theosophist. But, it may be said, Christians are striving in the same direction; then what is the need of Theosophy and the Society. The answer is that so-called Christianity is altruism *plus* "*orthodoxy*," that is, creeds, rites, ceremonies and litanies, and very often the ceremony serves only to obscure the altruism. Theosophy makes altruism only essential, and claims for each and every individual absolute liberty and perfect freedom to formulate any intellectual belief, or to repudiate all creeds, as seemeth to him best. With the warring sects of Christendom, as with other great religions, orthodoxy is considered essential. There are said to be over three hundred "sects" in Protestant England alone. If England has progressed that far toward personal liberty, the logic of events and the philosophy of history may easily forecast the future, and allow every man and woman to constitute a "sect," and the only loser will then be the organized power of the priesthood and Religious Establishment. The gainer will be Humanity. Then only will it be understood and every-where admitted, that the human soul is the real temple of the Most High; and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost will inspire the life of the soul of man. The "saving ordinances" will be the altruistic life of every man

and woman. Theosophy, therefore, means more Christianity and less orthodoxy; more altruism, more liberty, and less cerèmony; more genuine worship of the Simple Truth, and fewer shams.